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DEMOGRAPHIC AND SOCIAL STATISTICS

Demographic, social and migration statistics

Report of the Secretary-General

SUMMARY

The present report contains information on the activities completed by the United Nations Secretariat on the demographic and social statistics programme during 1993-1994. It covers the subjects of civil registration and vital statistics (paras. 2-12); international migration statistics (paras. 13-16); the Demographic Yearbook and its database (paras. 17-22); family and household statistics (paras. 23-24); human settlement statistics (paras. 25-27); and crime statistics (para. 28).

Future activities for 1995-1996 are proposed for each of the above subjects. Points for discussion by the Statistical Commission are also included (para. 32).

* E/CN.3/1995/1.

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INTRODUCTION

1. At its twenty-seventh session, the Statistical Commission requested three reports related to demographic and social statistics. 1/ However, based on their proposed outlines, the Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Coordination, at its sixteenth session, decided to consolidate the three reports into two reports (see E/CN.3/AC.1/1994/2, para. 56). Accordingly, the present report deals with demographic, social and migration statistics; a second report, which is also before the Commission (E/CN.3/1995/18), deals with population and housing censuses. Issues covered in the present report include civil registration and vital statistics (CR/VS), migration statistics, the Demographic Yearbook and its database, family and household statistics, human settlements, the statistics of large cities and crime statistics.

I. CIVIL REGISTRATION AND VITAL STATISTICS SYSTEMS AND METHODS

2. The Statistical Division of the United Nations Secretariat (UNSTAT) has continued its methodological work on the further development of CR/VS methods. It has also continued to provide technical support to countries for strengthening their civil registration and vital statistics systems. Substantial progress has been achieved in the implementation of the International Programme for Accelerating the Improvement of Vital Statistics and Civil Registration Systems.

A. Methodological work

3. In 1993, the Handbook of Vital Statistics Systems and Methods 2/ which had been issued earlier in English, was translated and published in French, Russian and Spanish. In order to assist countries in improving the operation of their CR/VS systems, a report on their management, operation and maintenance has been completed and is expected to be issued in the second quarter of 1995. Two other reports, one on CR/VS computerization and the other on the CR/VS legal framework, are under preparation and are expected to be completed by the fourth quarter of 1995. In addition, a technical report on the review and evaluation of CR/VS projects that are supported by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) was completed at the request and with the financial support of UNFPA; the report provides a critical review of the technical support services that have been provided to countries and how that support can be further improved.

4. In addition, five country studies on the feasibility for improving CR/VS systems have been completed for Brazil, Ecuador, Guatemala, Mexico and the Philippines. Four of those studies were prepared with financial assistance from the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). Two of the studies have been issued and the other three are expected to be issued in the near future. The studies were prepared in close consultation with the Governments concerned and they not only examine the issue of CR/VS in each country but also provide

suggestions on how a master plan for the improvement of CR/VS systems could be developed and implemented.

5. A microcomputer database on national CR/VS systems, including the legal framework, procedures for recording and reporting vital events, and definitions of vital events, is being developed by UNSTAT. The information contained in the database will be used to further study CR/VS methods and systems, and to support technical cooperation services being provided to developing countries.

B. International Programme for Accelerating the Improvement of Vital Statistics and Civil Registration Systems

6. As reported to the Statistical Commission at its twenty-sixth session, a series of workshops were planned for different regions of the world under the auspices of the International Programme for Accelerating the Improvement of Vital Statistics and Civil Registration Systems. The first such workshop was held for the Latin American region (Buenos Aires, 1991) and was organized by UNSTAT and hosted by the Government of Argentina. The second workshop was jointly organized by UNSTAT and the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) (Damascus, 20-24 June 1993) and was hosted by the Government of Syria; 12 member States of ESCWA participated. The third workshop was jointly organized by UNSTAT and the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) (Beijing, 29 November-3 December 1993) and was hosted by the Government of China; 14 ESCAP countries participated. The fourth workshop was organized by UNSTAT, in collaboration with the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), for selected English-speaking countries in Africa (Addis Ababa, 5-9 December 1994). As in previous workshops, representatives of countries or areas outside the ECA region and international organizations that are interested in the workshop, including the World Health Organization (WHO), UNICEF and UNFPA, were expected to participate.

7. Through the workshops, the International Programme attempted to

(a) Assess the current status of national civil registration and vital statistics systems, including their coverage, timeliness and reliability in the participating countries;

(b) Outline strategies to increase the efficiency of CR/VS systems during the 1990s and beyond;

(c) Discuss ways and means of raising the awareness of both the population at large and the staff involved in CR/VS activities.

8. In their recommendations, the workshops strongly urged governmental agencies dealing with CR/VS systems to strengthen their coordination and cooperation and to improve the timeliness, completeness and accuracy of the information that they provided. It also recommended the establishment of close links between CR/VS outputs and the end-users of the data and information. Suggestions were made on strengthening cooperation and collaboration with other national registration systems and programmes with common characteristics, such as (a) population registers and citizen registers; (b) electoral registers;

(c) health-care and family-planning programmes, and programmes for infants, children and women of reproductive age etc.; and (d) population identification services.

9. Another major activity of the International Programme is the development of a clearing-house for information on CR/VS systems. UNSTAT has begun to collect and maintain data from countries on methodology; laws and regulations; manuals of registration and statistical processes; and storage and retrieval systems of records and statistics. Those materials will be used to further develop a methodological database on CR/VS, as discussed in paragraph 5 above.

10. TO maintain the momentum developed in the workshops, UNSTAT has also maintained close contact with all participants in the workshops and has kept them informed on progress made in various countries. A first report was distributed in September 1994 to all participants in the workshops, national statistical offices and concerned international organizations; further reports are anticipated as new information becomes available.

C. Future activities

11. In 1995, the manuals mentioned in paragraph 3 above that are currently under preparation will be published. Two additional manuals, one on public and official use for civil registration and vital statistics records and another on population, education and communication for civil registration, are being planned and are expected to be completed in 1996. The CR/VS database will be further developed and clearing-house activities will be continued.

12. Work will be continued on the implementation of the International Programme. A fifth workshop on the subject for francophone countries in Africa has been scheduled for the third quarter of 1995. Similar workshops are also being contemplated for the economies in transition, if resources are available.

II. INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION STATISTICS

13. Pursuant to the request of the Statistical Commission at its twenty-seventh session, UNSTAT has initiated work on the review of the current recommendations on international migration statistics, in cooperation with United Nations regional commissions (Eurostat) and other organizations concerned. The review was necessary because, since the Commission adopted the current recommendations on the subject in 1976, the phenomenon of international migration has changed considerably in terms of its volume, direction and categories, especially in terms of the growing numbers of refugees, asylum-seekers and other migrants.

A. Review of current recommendations on international migration statistics

14. For the purposes of the review process, the Statistical Office of the European Community (Eurostat) initiated a series of important activities and considered them at a meeting of its Working Group on Migration Statistics

(Luxembourg, 13-14 December 1993). Following that meeting, a joint meeting of UNSTAT and Eurostat staff was held (New York, 20-21 January 1994) to (a) identify priority activities in the review process; (b) set up a possible division of work among UNSTAT, Eurostat, the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) and other concerned bodies, including the other regional commissions, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD); and (c) draw up a schedule of consultations and meetings to consider the outputs of various activities and advance the review process.

15. The UNSTAT-Eurostat joint meeting, after considering several United Nations publications that deal with migration statistics and the concerns raised regarding international migration statistics, identified three elements of the current recommendations for critical study: (a) concepts and definitions concerning flow and stock statistics; (b) the definition of immigrant stock/foreign population; and (c) statistics on refugees, asylum-seekers and other special categories of international population movements. The joint meeting decided in the first phase to proceed with the priority activities described below.

16. A special study on international migration flow and stock concepts and definitions based on a migration questionnaire prepared by Eurostat was thoroughly discussed and revised at the joint meeting. The questionnaire, which focuses in detail on current concepts, definitions and data sources, was sent by Eurostat to countries that are members of the European Union (EU) and the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) in the first quarter of 1994. It was designed to carefully review the national data situation, including underlying definitions and problems faced by EU and EFTA countries in implementing United Nations recommendations. The questionnaire was also sent by ECE to all its member countries except those EU and EFTA countries that had already been covered by the Eurostat study so as to ascertain their views on the implementation of the United Nations recommendations.

17. Responses from ECE countries to the migration questionnaire have been received and are currently being analysed by Eurostat. Consultation was held in September 1994 by the staff of UNSTAT and Eurostat with ECE, UNHCR, the ILO, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and other organizations based in Geneva to obtain their inputs to the review process. An initial report containing the analysis and results of the special study will be presented to the ECE/Eurostat Working Party on Migration Statistics, to be held in November 1994. In the last quarter of 1994, the second phase of work in the review process will be considered. In addition, ways of expanding the review process, including the above-mentioned study to cover countries in ESCAP, ECLAC and ESCWA, will be explored.

18. A joint UNSTAT-Eurostat meeting in January 1994 noted a growing interest in immigrant stock/foreign population statistics. Population censuses are the principal source of stock data in many countries. One key issue is the lack of harmony between concepts relating to stock data and flow statistics. Eurostat, with the assistance of a consultant, is carrying out a study on national practices and definitions on the subject. The experience of OECD in this area,

as well as the data obtained in the 1990 round of population censuses, are also considered valuable contributions to the review process. Further work will be undertaken by UNSTAT to examine issues in the compilation of immigrant stock data in other regions.

19. Eurostat is also carrying out, with the assistance of a consultant, a study of definitions, data sources and availability regarding refugees and asylum-seekers in EU and EFTA countries. The results of both studies will be presented for discussion at the above-mentioned ECE/Eurostat Working Party on Migration Statistics.

B. Future activities

20. In addition to extending the special study to countries of migration origin, UNSTAT and Eurostat will jointly organize an expert group meeting on international migration statistics in July 1995. The expert group will, inter alia, consider the findings of various studies undertaken as part of the review process. The report of the expert group, including possibly draft revised recommendations on international migration statistics, is to be submitted to the Statistical Commission at its twenty-ninth session.

III. DEMOGRAPHIC YEARBOOK AND DATABASES

21. In 1994, two issues of the Demographic Yearbook were published. The Demographic Yearbook - Special Issue: Population Ageing and the Situation of Elderly Persons 3/ commemorated the International Year of the Family and the convening of the International Conference on Population and Development. To prepare the Special Issue, a questionnaire was sent to all national statistical offices requesting that countries provide data of particular relevance to the study of elderly persons, including their living arrangements. A thorough review of the Demographic Yearbook computer data files was also made in order to reconstruct a history of population ageing over the past 40 years. In addition to statistical tables, the Special Issue contains several articles. Two of those articles were prepared in collaboration with WHO and the Population Division of the United Nations Secretariat: "Mortality trends among the elderly", which reviews mortality decline during the past 30 years and describes major causes of death, and "Age structure changes in 1950-1990", which describes how fertility and mortality decline lead to population ageing. Two other articles included in the Special Issue were prepared by UNSTAT: "Disability statistics in studies of ageing", which defines disability and discusses its relationship to population ageing, and "Household and family statistics on ageing", which is described in paragraph 27 below. The Demographic Yearbook 1992 4/ has fertility and mortality statistics as its special topic, showing trends in mortality over the past decade, together with the core annual tables.

22. In 1995, the Demographic Yearbook 1993 will be published, 5/ with population censuses as its special topic. In addition to the 25 core tables, the Demographic Yearbook 1993 will contain 15 tables on demographic and social characteristics drawn from population censuses concluded during the past decade.

In addition, the quarterly series Population and Vital Statistics Report has been issued on a regular basis.

23. The Demographic and Social Statistics Database (DSSD), a microcomputer database developed with the financial support of UNFPA, is now in full operation. The database contains data published since 1948 in the 44 issues of the Demographic Yearbook, as well as selected human settlement statistics. It provides rapid access to demographic and social time-series statistics, beginning with data from 1950. It also permits users to choose one of 30 topics by time period, by country or area, or by data source. As the development of DSSD continues, additional topics will be added and data files will be updated annually. It is anticipated that some files that are currently included only infrequently in the Yearbook, as well as other subjects such as statistics of cities, crime statistics and other social statistics, could also eventually be disseminated through DSSD, resources permitting.

24. Another project completed during 1993-1994 was the development of computer software to facilitate the reply to Demographic Yearbook questionnaires using microcomputers. In an experiment currently under way for the 1994 issue of the Demographic Yearbook questionnaires, 16 countries received a diskette with a request to provide population estimates, vital statistics and international migration statistics for the annual Demographic Yearbook series. It is hoped that the project will reduce the burden on national statistical offices reporting demographic statistics.

25. In 1996-1997, the 46th and 47th editions of the Demographic Yearbook will be published. In addition to the annual core tables, it is planned to devote the special topic to economic characteristics of the population in the 46th edition, and to household and family statistics in the 47th edition. The quarterly Population and Vital Statistics Report series will continue to be issued. DSSD will be maintained and, resources permitting, further developed.

26. Additional work on population ageing was undertaken in collaboration with the International Leadership Center on Longevity and Society, Mount Sinai School of Medicine, New York. With their financial support, UNSTAT provided advice on the choice of indicators and prepared tabulations for an almanac on ageing and social development to increased longevity. A database containing relevant statistics and indicators on population ageing for selected countries is under preparation and is expected to be completed in the third quarter of 1995.

IV. SOCIAL STATISTICS

A. Family and household statistics

27. UNSTAT has continued to further the development of methods in collecting family and household statistics by undertaking an extensive review of country practices on the collection and tabulation of family and household statistics, which will be discussed at the meeting of an expert group on population and housing censuses to be held in 1995. The questionnaire for the Demographic Yearbook - Special Issue: Population Ageing and the Situation of Elderly Persons, which was sent to countries in late 1992, contained four tables on

family/household composition and the living arrangements of the elderly. In the Special Issue, there are six tables devoted exclusively to households, household population, living arrangements for persons 60 years old and over, population in collective living quarters and homeless population etc. A special article entitled "Household and family statistics on ageing", which examines the basic concepts of family and household, classifications of households, and families and living arrangements of the elderly, was published in the Special Issue.

28. As part of the contribution of UNSTAT to the International Year of the Family, it completed an ad hoc project to prepare the Statistical Chart on World Families, 6/ with the financial assistance of the International Year of the Family secretariat. The Chart, which was published in all six official languages of the United Nations, provides users with family indicators on the number and size of families, family composition and the living conditions of families, together with statistical definitions.

B. Human settlements statistics and city statistics

29. In 1993, Housing in the World: Graphical Presentation of Statistical Data 7/ was prepared by UNSTAT to present statistical data on housing from the 1980 and 1990 rounds of housing censuses. The questionnaire on human settlements statistics that was sent out by UNSTAT in March 1992 was answered by 103 countries or areas by September 1994. Reported data were compiled and a database on housing and human settlements statistics (DATAHOUSE), has been developed. The construction of DATAHOUSE was closely coordinated with the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat), which also provided financial support for data processing. UNSTAT and Habitat are to jointly prepare a Compendium of Human Settlements Statistics for presentation at the Second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) (to be held in Istanbul, 3-14 June 1996).

30. UNSTAT collaborated further with Habitat in improving the collection of urban statistics. UNSTAT participated in the International Expert Group Meeting on Urban Indicators convened by Habitat (Nairobi, January 1994). The Meeting reviewed the suggested urban indicators that may be used for Habitat II and for international comparison purposes; recommendations were made for submission to the Preparatory Committee for Habitat II.

31. UNSTAT also participated in the Large Cities Statistics Project, a project initiated by the Network of Urban Researches of the European Union (NUREC) of Duisburg, Germany, and co-sponsored by the International Statistical Institute (ISI), International Union of Local Authorities (IULA), Habitat and UNSTAT. The project aims to collect and disseminate a comprehensive set of statistical data on large cities. A questionnaire was developed and sent to the mayors of all cities with a population of 100,000 and above. UNSTAT provided technical advice on the development of the questionnaire, the selection of indicators, and methods and procedures of data collection; it also requested national statistical offices to assist the mayors of their countries in completing the project. UNSTAT will continue to provide technical support throughout the remaining phase of the project; collected data are expected to become available to users in late 1995

C. Crime statistics

32. UNSTAT coordinated closely with the Criminal Justice and Crime Prevention Branch of the United Nations Office at Vienna in the administration of the Fourth United Nations Survey of Crime Trends and Criminal Justice Systems, assisting in the design, dispatch and collection of questionnaires. The Survey was a quinquennial exercise until 1994, when the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice decided to make it a biennial exercise. UNSTAT will continue to provide support to further data collection for the Fourth Survey and will continue to administer the data-collection process for the Fifth Survey, subject to the availability of resources. All the questionnaires returned to UNSTAT have been forwarded to the United Nations Office at Vienna for compilation and tabulation.

D. Future activities

33. UNSTAT plans to publish the Compendium of Human Settlement Statistics 8/ in collaboration with Habitat in the third quarter of 1995, when the development of DATAHOUSE will be complete and the database will be disseminated to users. UNSTAT will continue to provide advice to the Large Cities Statistics Project on its publication and dissemination; it also expects to provide further technical support to the Crime Justice and Crime Prevention Branch of the United Nations Office at Vienna in the processing, compilation and publication of the Fourth United Nations Crime Survey (see para. 32 above).

34. The Social Statistics Programme of UNSTAT will participate in the organization of an expert group meeting scheduled for 1995 on the 2000 World Programme of Population and Housing Censuses. UNSTAT will present proposals for revising the United Nations recommendations on housing censuses, taking into consideration developments arising from the 1980 and 1990 census rounds.

V. POINTS FOR DISCUSSION

35. The Commission may wish to:

(a) Advise on methodological work and comment on progress in the implementation of the International Programme for Accelerating the Improvement of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Systems, and endorse the proposal for additional workshops for the economies in transition;

(b) Consider activities in progress for the review/revision of the current recommendations on international migration statistics and suggest additional activities deemed necessary in the second phase covering countries of migration origin;

(c) Review and comment on the work under way in the field of social and related statistics in the light of emerging national requirements for social development and policy.

Notes

1/ Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1993, Supplement No. 6 (E/1993/26), para. 2.

2/ United Nations publication, Sales No. E.91.XVII.5.

3/ United Nations publication, Sales No. E.92.XIII.9.

4/ United Nations publication, Sales No. E/F.94.XIII.1.

5/ United Nations publication, forthcoming.

6/ Statistical Papers, Series Y, No. 7 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.XVII.9).

7/ Statistical Papers, Series F, No. 63 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.XVII.10).

8/ United Nations publication, forthcoming.